

REMARKS

The claims now pending in the application are Claims 1 to 4 and 6 to 18, the independent claims being Claims 1 and 16. Claim 5 has been cancelled herein. Claims 1, 4 and 16 have been amended herein.

In the Official Action dated March 15, 2004, The title was objected to as not descriptive of the claimed invention. Claims 1, 6 to 8, 10, 11, 13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,907,353 (Okauchi). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Okauchi '353 patent in view of U.S. Publication 2001/0043264 (Sinclair). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Okauchi '353 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,973,850 (Nagaoka). Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Okauchi '353 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,838,374 (Kikuchi), as confirmed by the Examiner in a telephone communication on or about May 26, 2004. Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Okauchi '353 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,455,685 (Mori). Claims 14, 16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Okauchi '353 patent in view of U.S. Publication No. 2002/0176017 (Hayashi). Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over the Okauchi '353 patent in view of the Hayashi '017 publication and the Sinclair '264 publication. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections respectfully are requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Initially, Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that the application contains allowable subject matter, and that Claims 4 and 5 are allowable over the prior art.

In this regard, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, and solely to advance prosecution of the application to issue, each of independent Claims 1 and 16 has been amended to recite the features of allowable Claim 5, which has been cancelled

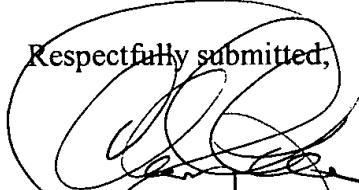
herein, and Claim 4 has been amended to conform with amended Claim 1. No new matter has been added, and Applicant believes that amended independent Claims 1 and 16 are allowable over the prior art, and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 2 to 4, 6 to 15, 17 and 18 depend from Claims 1 and 16, respectively, and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Moreover, each of these dependent claims recites additional features in combination with the features of independent Claims 1 and 16, and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

In a formal matter, Applicant has proposed a new title which describes more clearly the claimed invention, as requested by the Examiner.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action, and submits that the application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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